

The Pluses of Pediatric Rehab Therapy

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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Every year, thousands of children across the country receive some type of therapy, be it physical, occupational, feeding, speech, or other developmental therapy service. The earlier a child receives help, the better the potential for a positive outcome.

While there are similarities between pediatric and adult rehabilitation therapy, for children the approach is more focused on developmental goals.

SOT Krystyna Wojtkowski – Director, Regional Rehabilitation Services – OSF HealthCare

(In the adult rehab space we tend to focus on the rehabilitation piece, so the fact that, you know, I've 'lost' something - I need to learn how to do it again. So for example, I had a stroke - I need to learn how to speak, how to swallow, how to walk again - where as in Pediatrics we work a lot on the habilitative piece of the puzzle. So how do I navigate my world? I never had those skills so how do I develop them, how do I learn how to function in this world where I'm just expected to live. :30)

Krystyna Wojtkowski (*pronounced Kristina White-cow-ski*) is a feeding therapist by training. Feeding problems are common in children. Approximately 20-50% of normally developing children and 70-89% of children with developmental disabilities experience some type of feeding problems.

With a rise in the number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, therapists at OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois help them overcome a variety of sensory processing challenges. Some children with autism can't manage certain food consistencies and textures, while others may only like very limited types or shapes of food, which isn't nutritionally sound.

Wojtkowski says a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to therapy is necessary for children with autism.

SOT Krystyna Wojtkowski – Director, Regional Rehabilitation Services – OSF HealthCare

(I might have occupational therapy working directly with physical therapy and feeding therapy because as I noted there's a sensory regulation piece in there. So I might need the expertise of an occupational therapist to assist the speech therapist or feeding therapist and in the same breath there are also needs for behavioral modification therapy and ABA therapy to assess how do we help regulate that child so that they can function and do the best in the therapies while they're there and hopefully carry that out at home as well. :31)

Wojtkowski says as important as therapists' work with the children is, supporting and helping parents and caregivers learn what to do is just as important since they are caring for the child day-in and day-out, not just during a therapy session.

If you have concerns about your child's development, talk to their pediatrician. Learn more about some of the [milestones](#) they should be hitting and [pediatric rehab therapy services](#) available through [OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois](#).